

Winter 2014

# Idaho Tree Farm Program

204 E. Sherman Ave. • Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814 • (T) 208.667.4641 • (F) 208.664.0557  
www.idahotreefarm.org • admin@idahotreefarm.org

## 2013-2014

### Executive Committee:

- Chair – Doug Bradetich,  
Idaho Forest Group  
(T) 208.255.3208
- Vice-Chair –  
Steve Funk,  
Tree Farmer  
(T) 208.667.7345
- Treasurer –  
Steve Cuvala,  
Idaho Dept. of Lands  
(T) 208.245.4551

## 2013-2014

### District Chairs:

- District 1 Chair –  
Andy Eckberg,  
Idaho Forest Group  
aeckberg@idfg.com  
(T) 208.255.3276
- District 2 Chair –  
Robert Barkley,  
Idaho Dept. of Lands  
(T) 208.877.1121
- District 3 Chair –  
John Lillehaug,  
All About Forestry  
(T) 208.630.4076

## ***An Invitation to All Tree Farmers, Inspectors, Supporters and Friends!!***

## **The Idaho Tree Farm Program Annual Meeting and 2014 Family Forest Landowners and Managers Conference & Exposition**

**March 24-25, 2014 Moscow, Idaho**

### ***“It’s Your Land! Raising the Bar”***

Included with this edition of the newsletter is a brochure for the Family Forest Landowners & Managers Conference. The conference will be held once again at the University Inn Best Western in Moscow, ID on March 24 & 25. Also, we will hold our **annual meeting of the Idaho Tree Farm Program** on the evening of Monday the 24<sup>th</sup> at this same function. This meeting is open to the public and everyone is invited - Tree Farmers and Non-Tree Farmers alike. We will have hors d’oeuvres and a no-host bar available for a social hour at 6:30 that evening, then plan to start our program at 7:30. We will review our activities and on-the-ground accomplishments from last year and brief you on current plans for the coming year. The evening will be crowned with our awards for Idaho Outstanding Tree Farmer, Inspector and Logger of the Year.

The conference program this year is **“It’s Your Land! Raising the Bar”** and should be interesting and useful for folks wanting to take their stewardship to the next level. A diverse set of topics including land ethics, marketing, riparian restoration and pointers for putting on a woods tour on your Tree Farm are all on the docket. Should be something there for everyone!

This year a **"Ties to the Land: Your Family Forest Heritage"** workshop will be held prior to the conference on **Sunday, March 23** from 9 AM to 5 PM. On **Wednesday, March 26**, **"Ties to the Land" Next Steps: Continuing Your Legacy** will feature in- depth presentations from the professionals who make up the succession team. Both "Ties to the Land" Alumni and anyone interested in land transfer between generations are invited to attend.

Please make plans to attend this year. It’s always a great chance to visit, learn a little about what’s new, improve your stewardship skills, and recognize some truly outstanding individuals for their commitment and service to our members.



## Idaho Tree Farm Program Strategic Plan Project

One of the things our national Tree Farm staff has suggested is for each state to work on a three to five year strategic plan. These plans would help to more clearly define what each state feels is important and achievable to their programs, as well as chart a course to accomplish these goals. Facilitators and ATFS staff members were made available to the states to help in this and in late December the Idaho Tree Farm Committee took them up on their offer. We spent a day and a half in Coeur d'Alene on a planning retreat that everyone agreed was well spent and useful to our program. David Halley, a facilitator from North Carolina; and Mike Burns, Program Resource Manager for the American Forest Foundation, did a fine job in leading us through the process.

Much of the time involved discussions to decide on what could realistically be accomplished with our given resources and not to overstretch them. It was stressed by our facilitator we would be better to limit ourselves to a few worthwhile goals that will indeed be achieved rather than choosing several that were only partly successful. With that in mind we settled on three areas of focus and action for the near future – Communications, Inspectors, and Forest Certification.

**Communications:** For our program to be useful to members, we need to be able to get information out to you in a timely manner. We also want to meet with you more often, both on an individual basis and in more casual and social group settings. Our first task is to update and expand our database with current contact information, especially emails. In this electronic age emails are a quick and inexpensive way to inform you on any number of topics. We will be contacting you all in the near future to double check that our contacts for you are correct. In addition we will continue to plan more group functions such as coffee socials, Tree Farm tours and other get-togethers. We tried this on a couple occasions this past year and it seemed to be well received and enjoyable.

**Inspectors:** Inspectors are the backbone of our on-the-ground efforts. Without them we can't continue. With this in mind we need to regularly train new Inspectors and make sure we are effectively using those already trained. We intend to give some recognition to those folks who spend their time working with our members; especially the "high achievers" that regularly seem to go above and beyond. Once trained, our goal will be to have each Inspector out on the ground at least once or twice each year. In our outreach for new Inspectors we will include the supervisors at both private and public entities to ensure they understand the importance of Tree Farm and how their foresters can take part.

**Forest Certification:** Something that sets ATFS apart from all other private land stewardship programs is forest certification. Tree Farms in our system are currently third party certified as sustainable; and products can be sold as such at market. In past newsletters we have mentioned the "State Choice, State Voice" option now offered. States are being given the chance to either opt in or out of ATFS Certification status depending on the importance they see in it. We will be required to make a formal declaration of whether or not we want to continue by 12-31-15. In the meantime we want to get all the necessary information on this subject out to our members, sponsors and partners so we can make the best decision.

*"We have seen significant growth in our Idaho program over the past few years and would like very much to continue expanding our activities. This strategic plan should help us do just that. We look forward to visiting with you all as we move forward in these efforts."*

*Doug Bradetich, ITFC chair*



## **Idaho Forest Practice Act Update for the New “Shade Rules”**

The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) has proposed a new Class I Streamside Tree Retention Rule, otherwise known as the “Shade Rule”. The rule is currently being considered by the legislature and appears very likely to pass. This pending rule is the result of over a decade of hard work. In 2000 and 2004, Department of Environmental Quality audits identified weaknesses in the current Tree Retention rule. These issues were brought to the Forest Practices Act Advisory Committee (FPAAC), which began the process of developing a rule that would provide a minimum threshold of shade and would be scientifically sound.

IDL has followed a rulemaking process that included input from the public and many statewide stakeholder groups. Through this process a rule was created, based on scientifically sound principles, using actual Idaho data. The rule contains stocking requirements that provide the necessary threshold of shade to protect streams and assure large woody debris recruitment for stream structure. The rule provides two management options for landowners to choose from, offering a level of flexibility that is unique to Idaho.

IDL is busy developing the tools and resources necessary to help individuals employ the new rule on the ground. We are confident this new rule strikes an appropriate balance between landowner rights and the protection of public resources.

*Archie Gray CF*

*Forest Practices Program Manager, Idaho Department of Lands*

If you desire more information or have questions on this, you can log onto the Idaho Department of Lands website at: [www.idl.idaho.gov](http://www.idl.idaho.gov). There is a link on this site to “rulemaking” with the names and contact information listed.

## **We Can't Help You if We Can't Find You... Help Us Update Your Contact Information**

As stated in our communications plan for this year, we want to make a concerted effort to update our files with the most current contact information for each of you. If you could help us in this, it would be greatly appreciated and make us much more efficient in getting you the things you need to know in caring for your Tree Farm. Name, address, and phone number are always important, but increasingly your email address is also needed. We have email for a good portion of you, but would like to gather up all those we are missing. Our goal is to be able to eliminate the expense and clutter of paper mail for all of you that would prefer to go with electronic copies and to build a database for easy distribution of information, notices and alerts to help you.

If you desire to move to email for your correspondence with us, or if you have new contact information to share, please contact our office at **(208)-667-4641** or email [admin@idahotreefarm.org](mailto:admin@idahotreefarm.org) and let us know. We will gather up as much contact info as we can but depending on the success of these efforts we may need to make some phone calls to some of you as well to get our contact base up to speed.

## What's All This About Being “Certified”?

Earlier in this edition, part of the recap of our strategic planning retreat spoke to “Forest Certification” and whether we wanted to continue with Idaho Tree Farm as a certified program or not. I still get questions quite often as to exactly what certification is, what it entails for the landowner and what does it mean when you take products to market. As part of this process of deciding whether we opt in or out, we will try to include something on the subject in each edition. Here is a basic background to start:

It is fairly common now for us to see stamps of sustainable certification on many different items lining our stores and shops. Specific to forest products a sometimes confusing alphabet soup of acronyms and logos are in use. Currently, woodlots entered into membership in the **American Tree Farm System (ATFS)** are certified through the **Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC®)**. This certification program recognizes both land certified through the **Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI®)** and land certified through **ATFS** as meeting their standards for sustainability.

Periodically, states will be up for independent third party audit of their Tree Farm program and a selection of individual Tree Farms will be drawn for review. If current with the 2010 standards, your **Tree Farm Management Plan** covers all the benchmarks necessary to warrant PEFC certification and that is why “Where's your management plan?” is one of the first questions your Tree Farm Inspector will tend to ask you. It's very important you keep a copy on hand and equally important to keep it updated as certification standards change. Your Inspector can help you keep up to speed on current standards.

Regarding the mills you deal with – many of them sell certified products in the marketplace. Most of the larger, more familiar building supply outlets require the mills to be certified in order to do business with them. Like your Tree Farm, these milling companies also have a third party approved program that allows them to use the various “green” logos. Depending on the markets they sell into, the fact your wood originated from a Certified Tree Farm may be of interest. When you go to market with your wood, make sure your buyer knows you are selling logs from ATFS land. This may or may not be of interest to them, but if nothing else you are reinforcing the fact you have certified wood to sell and helping to increase the brand recognition for ATFS products.

*Doug Bradetich, ITFC chairman*

## Coffee Social Planned for McCall on May 15, 2014

This past year we started a new outreach activity for members by holding a couple coffee socials, one in Sandpoint and another in St Maries. These seemed to go over quite well so we have decided to continue this year. As promised this next social will be in the McCall area, and will be in conjunction with the Forest Stewardship Field Tour planned there for May 15. University of Idaho Extension Forester Randy Brooks is heading up the Field Day and is busy getting the stops all set up. If you have questions or are interested in attending the Field Tour, contact Randy for more information at [rbrooks@uidaho.edu](mailto:rbrooks@uidaho.edu). We are still in the planning stage on the social at this point, but will send along more information as to time & place as we get the details nailed down. This is a great chance to get to know some of your fellow Tree Farmers a little better and “talk trees” with some like-minded folks. We will include a presentation on Tree Farm happenings on both the local and national level as well as any updates on insect & disease, regulations, or other related topics. We look forward to seeing you there!



## **Insect & Disease Update and Outlook for Idaho in 2014, or “How Does Winter Weather Affect Insect Development?”**

Overall, insect and disease activity has been trending down in Idaho. The acreages of the large scale bark beetle and defoliator outbreak are much smaller than they have been the last few years, though there is still some activity statewide. The exception is Douglas-fir beetle, which is on an uptick. Highly visible diseases such as larch needle cast and foliar diseases of pines have also decreased, mostly as a result of the drier, more normal spring weather in 2013. Other diseases such as root disease and dwarf mistletoes continue to be issues throughout Idaho. These diseases are not well represented in aerial surveys, and they are not subject to increases or decreases due to factors such as weather.

Speaking of weather, a lot of folks have questions regarding insects and winter weather. Entomologists are often asked whether cold weather will kill off insects and cause the collapse of outbreaks. The short answer is: It depends, but usually not. You must remember that most of the insects that affect our forests have evolved with their hosts and are used to winter temperatures. As with most things, there are some exceptions. Most bark beetles are not affected by cold winter temperatures (at least as cold as we get in northern Idaho). However when temperatures reach well below zero for extended periods (-20 to -40° F) for more than a week) there can be significant mortality. You must remember that bark beetles are under the bark and may be under several feet of snow which can insulate them from the cold. The timing of the cold event is also important. Insects have behavioral and biochemical mechanisms that protect them from freezing. Insects void their gut contents and accumulate antifreeze compounds in their bodies in the fall. If subzero temperatures occur before these mechanisms take place (November) there can be widespread mortality. Insects that overwinter as eggs (such as many defoliators) are usually not affected by cold winter weather. The western spruce budworm is not particularly affected by cold winter weather, even though it overwinters as a larva. It is however very sensitive to late frosts which kill off new growth. It was the cold weather in the spring of 2013 when larvae were exposed that was probably responsible for the large decrease in budworm acres in Idaho last year.

Remember that insects are cold blooded, so mild fall and winter weather can prolong development in and cause them to emerge sooner. The dry winter in much of Idaho in 2013 and 2014 is cause for some concern regarding some bark beetle species. Drought causes tree stress, and some bark beetles such as the pine engraver (*Ips*), fir engraver and Douglas-fir beetle are attracted to stressed trees. The lack of snow may increase problems with pine engraver, especially if the spring turns out to be dry. Mild spring weather increases the temptation to conduct management activities in pines in the late winter and early spring. Even during normal weather conditions, it is risky to conduct management activities such as harvesting or thinning in pines between December and June. The recommended time to work in pines is between July and November, to minimize the amount of green slash available to the overwintering beetles. If you must harvest or thin pines in the winter or spring, you must take precautions to minimize suitable slash or contain the beetles when they emerge such as: trampling, burning or chipping piles, or making large piles (10 X 20 X 20 ft) throughout the management unit. If management continues through June, the green chain technique can be used to contain the beetles.

See the Idaho Department of Lands Forester Forum for more information:

<http://www.idl.idaho.gov/bureau/ForestAssist/foresterforum/aug2012id/ID-01.pdf>.

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## Insect & Disease Update and Outlook for Idaho in 2014

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### Some General Predictions for 2014

Douglas-fir beetle will probably increase in the Clearwater valley and in areas that have been impacted by fire or wind events. Mountain pine beetle will probably continue to decrease in 2014 following the trend of the last several years. Pine engraver and fir engraver may increase if we continue to follow the recent dry trend. Fir engraver would be expected to be worse in grand fir growing on drier sites. No Douglas-fir tussock moth activity is expected in Idaho for the next several years, and western spruce budworm will probably remain below average in 2014

Tom Eckberg, Idaho Department of Lands,

### ***Events to Highlight***

**March 24-25, 2014** – Family Forest Landowners & Managers Conference & Exposition, Moscow

**March 24, 2014** – Idaho Tree Farm Program Annual Meeting, Moscow

**April 17, 2014** – Idaho Tree Farm Committee Meeting, Cd'A

## **IFOA Accepts Management of Forest Seedling Program**

At their November 6<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, the Panhandle Lakes Resource Conservation and Development Council voted to transfer management of the Forest Seedling Program to the Idaho Forest Owners Association.

This well established program is a credible and trusted source of tree seedlings for private forest landowners and managers in Idaho. Obtaining economically priced, seed-zone appropriate, and healthy seedlings is crucial for successful reforestation or afforestation projects, both large and small.

The program annually offers more than 100,000 quality native seedlings of species such as ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), western white pine (*Pinus monticola* - the Idaho State tree!), western larch (*Larix occidentalis* - "tamarack"), lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), and Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) in various containerized soil medium "plug" sizes and larger "plug +1" bare root options.

Seedling orders for Spring 2014 planting are currently being taken, but supplies are reserved quickly. Current inventory is down to just a few hundred seedlings. The recommendation for landowners is to keep their forest management plan up to date so you can anticipate reforestation needs early and get your order in a year ahead of planting.

Your orders are processed through four local county Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

BENEWAH SWCD	(208)-686-1699x109
BONNER SWCD	(208) 263-5310x100
BOUNDARY SWCD	(208) 267-3340x107
KOOTENAI-SHOSHONE SWCD	(208) 762-4939x101

### ***Stay Informed....***

In case you are ever wondering what is going on at the committee level, our minutes are now being posted on the Idaho Tree Farm Program website. Just log onto our website for minutes of previous session, contact information, upcoming events, and other news of note to help you in your Tree Farm endeavors.

### **We're on the Web!**

*Learn more at:*

[www.idahotreefarm.org](http://www.idahotreefarm.org)

### ***About Our Organization...***

The purpose of the Idaho Tree Farm Program is to promote better forest management among nonindustrial forest owners. The vehicle for achieving this aim is the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), sponsored nationally by the **American Forest Foundation (AFF)**, regionally by the **Idaho SFI Implementation Committee**, and statewide by the **Idaho Tree Farm Committee (State Committee)**.

